

### American Holly (Ilex opaca)



As you walk down the trail, look for the sharp, spiny, evergreen leaves of the American holly. It is also known as the Christmas holly because the red fruits appear in winter and are used for Christmas decorations. If eaten, their berries can make people very sick but are a valuable winter food source for deer and a variety of bird species.

### Longleaf Pine (Pinus palustris)

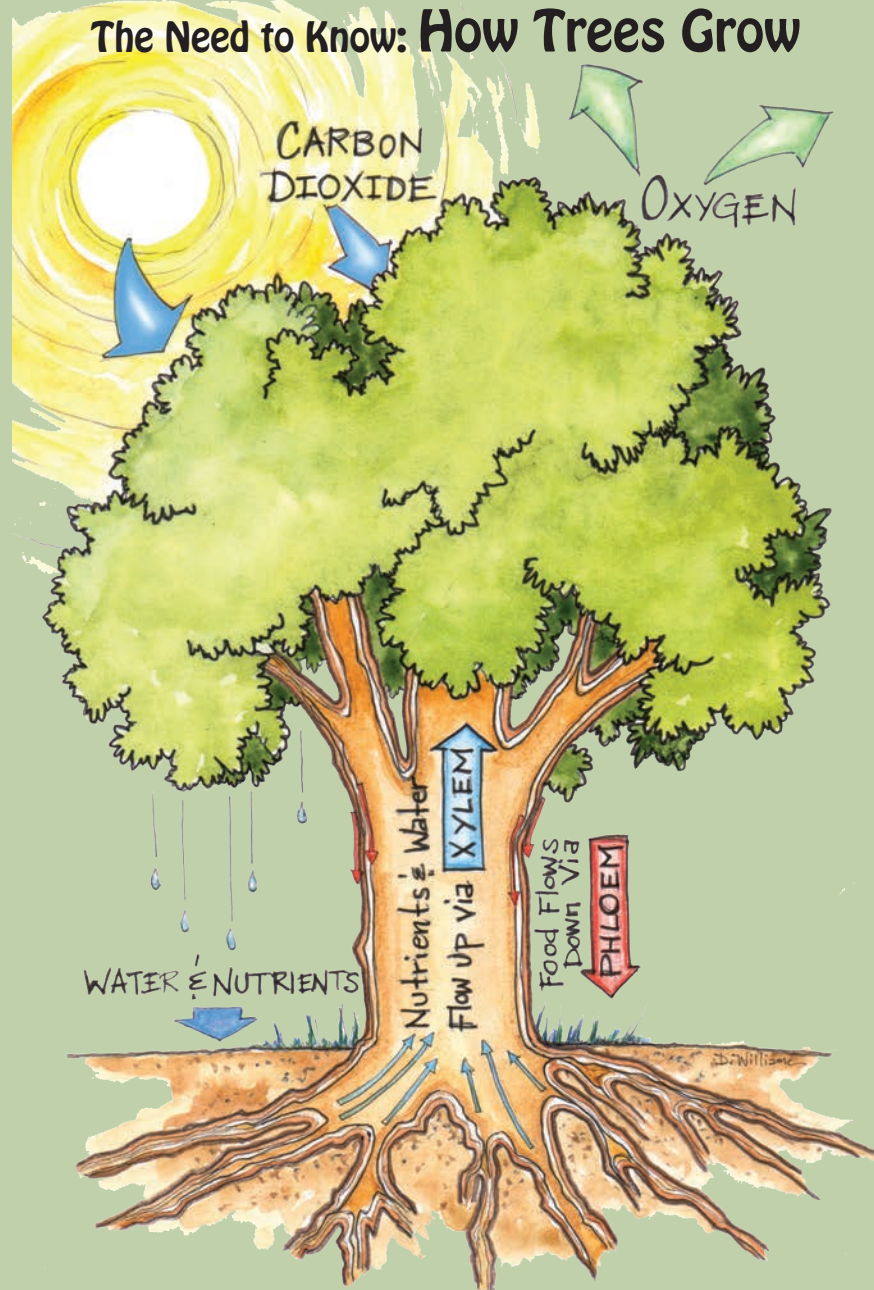


With needles up to 18 inches long, it's easy to see how the longleaf pine got its name. You can often find the longleaf in its "grass stage", where it appears as a short, clump of needles growing closer to the ground. It has course, rectangular bark, and its six to ten inch cones are somewhat cylindrical. The longleaf was once a major source for turpentine and resin, as well as lumber for shipbuilding.

### Loblolly Pine (Pinus taeda)



Loblolly pines have clusters of needles that grow in groups of three. The bark is thick, scaly and grey with layers of brown underneath, and their pinecones are brown and prickly. The loblolly can grow very quickly in either wet or dry soil. Because of how fast it grows, people plant them in huge numbers to later be used for lumber and paper. People also plant them to create shade and to stop erosion.



Plants and trees have the ability to make their own food in a process known as **photosynthesis**. They do this by sucking water and nutrients from the soil up through their xylem and into their leaves. The water and nutrients are combined with carbon dioxide and sunlight to make a sugary food called **glucose**. This food then travels down through the phloem to the rest of the tree, so it can grow.

Illustrations by David Williams, Wingin' it Works

### Sweetgum (Liquidambar styraciflua)



The Sweetgum is a "pioneer plant", meaning that Sweetgums are among the first to begin growing in empty soil. Sweetgum seeds are carried by the tree's unique, spikey fruit, called a "gumball", and each fruit can contain up to 50 seeds. Other characteristics of the Sweetgum include its star-shaped leaves, and gray, wrinkled bark. Many animals depend on the Sweetgum for both food and shelter.

### American Sycamore (Platanus occidentalis)



This fast growing tree is easily recognizable by its mottled bark, which peels off in large irregular sheets to reveal shades of white, green, yellow, and brown underneath. The leaf can have three to five lobes, and its edges are wavy with teeth. The sycamore is also known as a buttonwood because of its round, bristly fruits. Parts of the tree were once used by Native Americans as medicine.

### Water Oak (Quercus nigra)



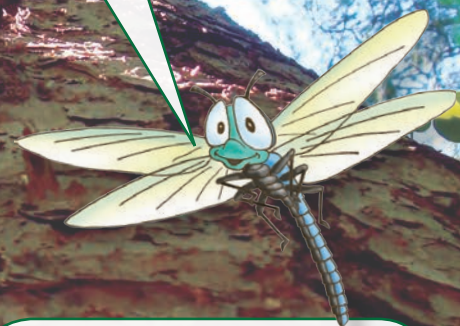
The water oak's leaves are spatula-like with three lobes at the end. The brown and grey bark tends to appear patchy, and it will develop rough, scaly ridges as it ages. They produce small acorns with shallow caps about the size of a dime. Forgotten acorns, buried by squirrels, are most responsible for the abundance of this fast-growing tree, and people often use the water oak's wood to heat their homes.



# The Need for Trees

Trees are very important to people, animals, insects, fungi, and even other trees. This is because trees provide so many things for people and the forest, including shelter, habitat, food and oxygen.

This TRACK Trail Adventure will help you identify six of the most common trees found along this trail.



Use this brochure to identify and learn about trees.

For your safety, stay on the trail and be aware of your surroundings. Poison ivy climbs up the trunks of trees, too... so if you see a hairy vine, don't hug that tree!



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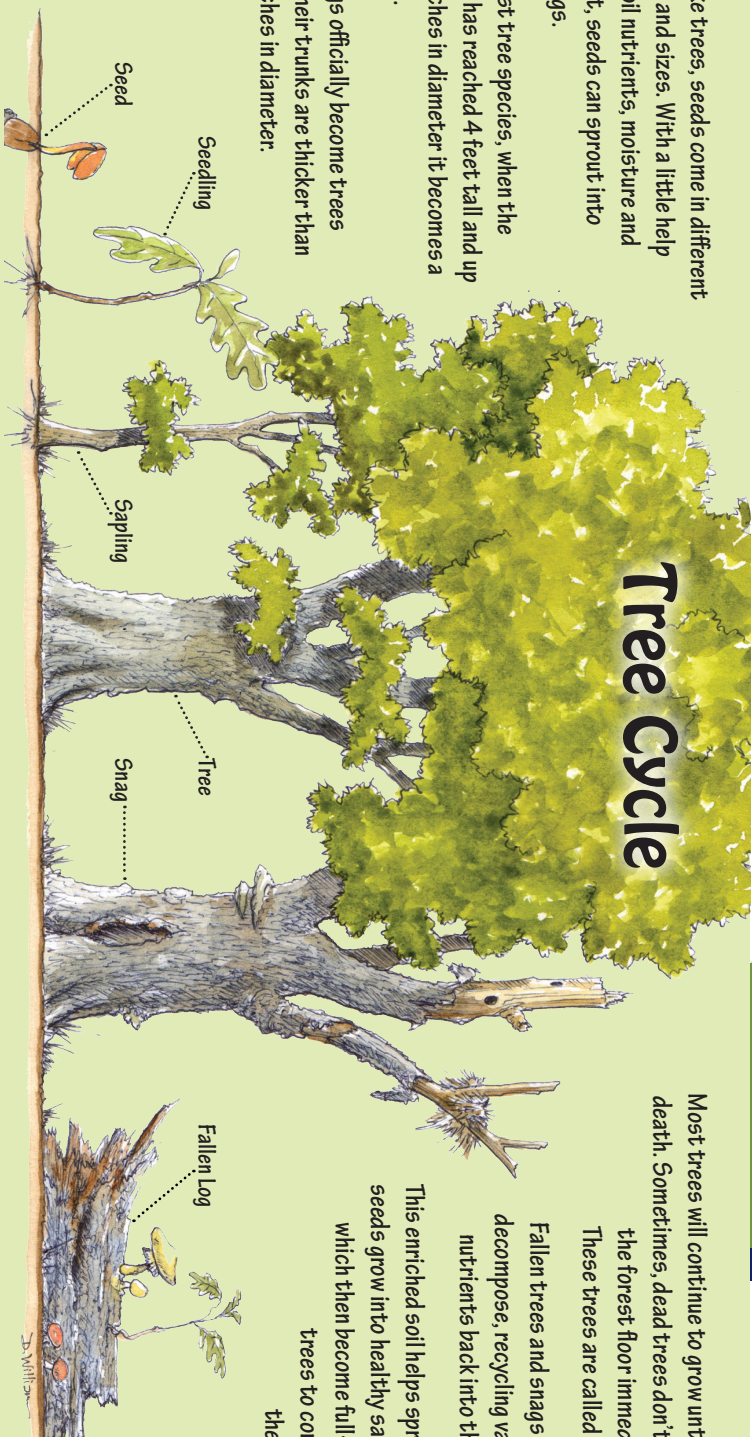


Just like trees, seeds come in different shapes and sizes. With a little help from soil nutrients, moisture and sunlight, seeds can sprout into seedlings.

For most tree species, when the sprout has reached 4 feet tall and up to 4 inches in diameter it becomes a sapling.

Saplings officially become trees when their trunks are thicker than four inches in diameter.

## Tree Cycle



Most trees will continue to grow until their death. Sometimes, dead trees don't fall to the forest floor immediately. These trees are called snags. Fallen trees and snags slowly decompose, recycling valuable nutrients back into the soil. This enriched soil helps sprouting seeds grow into healthy saplings, which then become full-grown trees to complete the cycle.

Can you find a...

Seed? \_\_\_

Seedling? \_\_\_

Sapling? \_\_\_

Tree? \_\_\_

Snag? \_\_\_

Fallen Log? \_\_\_